

GOLF Magazine names Moorpark CC among its “Top 10 New Courses You Can Play” for 2003

MOORPARK, Calif. — Moorpark Country Club, a 27-hole Jacobsen Hardy design located in the coastal foothills north of Los Angeles, was honored by the editors at GOLF Magazine as one of the nation’s top 10 courses to have opened for play in 2003.

Thanks to a covenant agreement with the town of Moorpark, public tee times at semi-private Moorpark Country Club will be made available in perpetuity (805-532-2834, www.moorparkcountryclub.com).

“We pushed for the covenant because Moorpark is too good NOT to share with the public,” said Jim Hardy, a partner with PGA Tour veteran Peter Jacobsen in Houston-based Jacobsen Hardy Golf Course Design (www.jacobsenhardy.com). “We’re very pleased that GOLF Magazine has seen fit to honor Moorpark in this way, but we really should give a nod to Mother Nature. The setting here is dramatic in the extreme. We had a lot to work with and the third nine, when it opens next year, will be even more spectacular.”

That said, the existing 18 holes were not, as minimalists like to say, “identified” in the natural landscape. The terrain here is beautiful — nestled high in the heart of Ventura County's equestrian, citrus and avocado country — but it’s also extremely rugged, with huge elevation changes and ridges that fall off into deep canyons and washes, wet or dry depending on the season. The 2nd fairway at Moorpark, to cite just one example, was lowered some 50 feet in order to make it wide and playable enough. Of the 27 holes here, only two, #7 and #12, were built at natural grade. The others were all carved out and created according to Jacobsen Hardy’s innovative design plan.

“We’ve worked on several excellent designs where we were obliged to create drama and strategy from pretty tame terrain, like our course at Redstone [Golf Club in Houston, former site of the Shell Houston Open] and our new layout at Hammock Bay in Naples [Fla.],” said Jacobsen. “At Moorpark, however, the exercise was just the opposite: take a piece of spectacular property and make it playable. I think we met that challenge. The fairways are wide and the elevation makes several holes appear more intimidating than they actually play — and that dynamic is fun for public

golfers. We're very proud of how Moorpark turned out, and we're glad GOLF Magazine sees it the way we do."

It's been quite a 12-month period for Moorpark General Manager Mike Nix and Head Golf Course Superintendent Mike Harmon. The 7,078-yard course opened in early 2003 and kept a low profile until late September when the clubhouse was finished, occasioning a full-fledged grand opening. But just a few weeks later, wild fires tore through the Simi Valley region. Hundreds of thousands of neighboring acres were scorched, but Moorpark escaped unscathed. Indeed, the golf course provided a natural fire break and safe haven for immediately endangered species.

"All the animals ran onto the golf course during the fires: bobcats, mountain lions, deer, coyotes, you name it," Nix explained. "There's 200,000 acres burned all around us. Pretty amazing, but we sustained no damage whatever. We were lucky."

Moorpark CC is on its way to Audubon International certification. Harmon says the facility has completed the application and is now in the process of counting species. "When we were growing in the golf course," Harmon explains, "we set up three different 'game guzzlers', which are basically drinking fountains for deer. All the birds came back as a result and now they're congregating around the golf course. Building this layout gave them a safe habitat because there's no hunting here anymore, obviously."

— 30 —

[For more information on Jacobsen Hardy, call 281-807-4176 or visit www.jacobsenhardy.com]